

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAKAR 04214 181630Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PRS-01 USIA-15 /037 W

----- 115553

R 181453Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1629

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

UNCLAS DAKAR 4214

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BBGP, BFOL, BGEN, SG

SUBJ: PAN-AF FOLLOW-UP

REF: STATE 129897

SUMMARY: EMBOFF MET JULY 14 WITH SENEGALESE DELEGATION TO PAN AFRICAN BUSINESS CENTER SEMINAR (PAN AF). CONSENSUS WAS NEGATIVE TOWARD PAN-AF BUT POSITIVE TOWARD SUBSEQUENT VISIT COMMERCE. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW UP WITH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO INVESTIGATE PROPOSALS NOT YET IN COMMERCE CHANNELS.

1. EMBASSY OFFICER MET JULY 14 WITH ISSA DIOP, PRESIDENT DAKAR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WHO LED SENEGALESE DELEGATION TO PAN-AFRICAN BUSINESS CENTER SEMINAR WHICH TOOK PLACE IN NEW YORK DURING MAY. ALSO PRESENT WERE TWO MEMBERS OF SENEGALESE PAN-AF DELEGATION: ABDOULAYE FOFANA AND ALY SELEH, BOTH PRESIDENTS OF LARGE IMPORT-EXPORT FIRMS. PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO ELICIT SENEGALESE EVALUATION OF PAN-AF MEETING AND OVERALL RESULTS OF TRIP TO U.S. ISSA DIOP HAD POLLED SENEGALESE PAN-AF DELEGATES PRIOR TO JULY 14 MEETING SO THAT CONSENSUS OF SENEGALESE VIEWS COULD BE PRESENTED.

2. SENEGALESE CONSENSUS REGARDING PAN-AF WAS UNIFORMLY NEGATIVE. IT WAS FELT THAT IDEA OF BRINGING TOGETHER

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 DAKAR 04214 181630Z

AMERICAN AND SENEGALESE BUSINESSMEN WITH SERIOUS PROPOS-

ALS WAS WORTHWHILE. BUT PAN-AF WAS CRITICIZED ON MANY POINTS OF ORGANIZATION AND ORIENTATION. AMONG THESE CRITICISMS WERE: EXCESSIVE ATTENTION TO NIGERIANS, TO THE NEGLECT OF OTHER DELEGATIONS; POOR PREPARATION OF PROGRAM; AND INADEQUATE TRANSLATION SERVICES. NO LISTS OF PARTICIPANTS AND NO PROPOSALS WERE CIRCULATED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE. CONTRARY TO PAN-AF CLAIMS, SENEGALESE SAID, MANY US FIRMS WERE REPRESENTED BY PUBLIC RELATIONS TYPES RATHER THAN DECISION MAKERS. PROPOSALS OF SOME DELEGATES ALLEGEDLY WERE NOT CIRCULATED AT ALL. FINALLY, ALL DELEGATES CRITICIZED PAN-AF PREOCCUPATION WITH "POLITICAL SIDESHOWS" RATHER THAN CONDUCTING BUSINESS.

3. IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THEIR REACTION TO PAN-AF SESSIONS, MEMBERS WHO VISITED DEPT OF COMMERCE WERE PLEASED WITH TREATMENT AND ATTENTION THEY RECEIVED THERE. COMMERCE TODAY PUBLICATIONS OF JUNE 23 WAS NOTED. VISITORS RECOGNIZED THAT IF THEY HAD INFORMED EMBASSY (AND DEPT OF COMMERCE) MORE FULLY ABOUT GROUP'S OBJECTIVES IN ADVANCE VISIT TO DEPT OF COMMERCE COULD HAVE BEEN MADE EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL. REPORTEDLY ONLY ONE MEMBER OF DELEGATION HAS COME BACK WITH A USEFUL CONTACT, A US DISTRIBUTOR OF AUTO PARTS. US FIRMS' INSISTENCE ON REFERRING INQUIRIES TO EUROPEAN SUBSIDIARIES AND AGENTS IS RESENTED. NONETHELESS, ALL MEMBERS MAINTAIN STRONG INTEREST IN MAKING CONTACTS WITH MEDIUM-SIZE AMERICAN FIRMS READY TO EXPLORE AFRICAN MARKETS DIRECTLY, WITHOUT EUROPEAN INTERMEDIARIES.

4. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW UP VIA APPOINTMENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO SEE IF WE CAN UNCOVER ANY PROPOSALS NOT YET IN COMMERCE CHANNELS.  
AGGREY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 18 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 STATE 129897  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** hartledg  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 MAR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 MAR 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <23 MAR 2004 by hartledg>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PAN-AF FOLLOW-UP  
**TAGS:** BBGP, BFOL, BGEN, SG  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006